

REMARKS

Pursuant to the final Office Action pending claims 1-19 stand rejected. Herewith no claims are amended, no claims are canceled and no new claims are added.

Applicants request entry of and favorable consideration of the remarks presented herewith.

Responsive to the final Office Action dated 15 March 2006 which set a three-month period for reply, the Amendment after Final is submitted in advance of the expiration of two-months from the mailing of said final Office Action.

This Amendment after Final is submitted in an attempt to place the application in condition for allowance without raising additional issues or requiring additional search of the subject matter claimed. In the event that the Examiner does not issue a Notice of Allowance in response to the submission, Applicants respectfully request that the finality of the instant Office Action be reconsidered so that prosecution of the claimed subject matter may continue in due course.

Please enter and favorably consider the following remarks in the above-captioned application.

Claim Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-19 are rejected as allegedly unpatentable over the '980 patent to Mehra (Mehra) in view of the '884 patent to Gillie et al. (Gilli).

Applicants respectfully assert that Mehra is devoid of any teaching or suggestion regarding what could be characterized as persistent prioritized rules ("sticky rules" per the specification) - a limitation found in the claims - and Gilli does not fairly include teaching, disclosure or suggestion regarding said claim limitation. As such the Examiner has failed to posit a *prima facie* obviousness rejection and the claims should now be deemed allowable.

Rejection for Double Patenting (provisional)

Claims 1-19 stand *provisionally* rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claim 1 of U.S. Pat. No. 5,545,186, claims 1-7 of U.S. Pat. No. 5,991,656, claims 1-10 of U.S. Pat. No. 6,259,947, claims 1-13 of U.S. Pat. No. 6,487,443, and claims 5-17 of U.S. Pat. No. 6,731,879.

Since the rejection is provisional in nature as none of the rejected claims has been identified as allowable, Applicants aver that no response is required. That said, Applicants assert that the claims, both as previously presented and as now amended, are in fact patentably distinct and not rendered obvious by the cited patents.

In any event Applicants reserve the right to lodge a terminal disclaimer in the event that the Examiner persists in said rejection, should allowable claims be identified.

Conclusion

Applicants assert that claims 1-19 are now in condition for allowance. There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited. If the Examiner has questions or concerns regarding this response, a telephone call to the undersigned is encouraged and welcomed.

Respectfully submitted,
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